

it was a matter of life and death. I seized one gun, he another, and up we rushed, the mate with his gun after us. There was not much difficulty in knowing in what direction to turn, for from the rail on the starboard side came confused shouts of human voices, and from the ice below the gangway the sound of a frightful uproar of dogs. I tore out the tow-plug at the muzzle of my rifle, then up with the lever and in with a cartridge; it was a case of hurry. But, hang it! there is a plug in at this end too. I poked and poked, but could not get a grip of it. Peter screamed: 'Shoot, shoot! Mine won't go off! He stood clicking and clicking, his lock full of frozen vaseline again, while the bear lay chewing at a dog just below us at the ship's side. Beside me stood the mate, groping after a tow-plug which he also had shoved down into his gun, but now he flung the gun angrily away and began to look round the deck for a walrus spear to stick the bear with. Our fourth man, Mogstad, was waving an empty rifle (he had shot away his cartridges), and shouting to some one to shoot the bear. Four men, and not one that could shoot, although we could have prodded the bear's back with our gun-barrels. Hansen, making a fifth, was lying in the passage to the chart-room, groping with his arm through a chink in the door for cartridges; he could not get the door open because of 'Kvik's' kennel. At last Johansen appeared and sent a ball straight down into the bear's hide. That did some good. The monster let go